

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 2, 6 – 14, 17 – 20, and 22 are pending, with claim 20 being independent. Without conceding the propriety of the rejections and merely to expedite prosecution, claims 1, 3-5, 15, and 16 have been canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 2, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 17 – 19, and 22 have been amended to even more clearly recite and distinctly claim Applicant's invention and to pursue an early allowance. Support for the amendments can be found in the original claims as well as throughout the specification. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicants would initially like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 20 is allowed. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejections in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-5, 12, 13, 15-19, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 2,620,365 ("Anderson") in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,935,577 ("Huss"). Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 1, 3 – 5, 15, and 16 has been canceled merely to expedite prosecution without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Also, without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 2, 12, 13, 17 – 19, and 22 have been amended to depend from claim 20. Accordingly, this rejection has been obviated. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 6 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson in view of Huss, and further in view of WO 95/21872 ("Abdul-Sada"). Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 6 and 7 now depend from claim 20. Accordingly, this rejection has been obviated. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 8 – 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson in view of Huss, and further in view of EP 0673352B1 (“Keskinen”). Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claims 8 – 11 now depend from claim 20. Accordingly, this rejection has been obviated. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Anderson in view of Huss, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,025,533 (“Vora”). Without conceding the propriety of the rejections, claim 14 now depends from claim 20. Accordingly, this rejection has been obviated. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully submit that all outstanding rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) have been obviated. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request early allowance of the subject application.

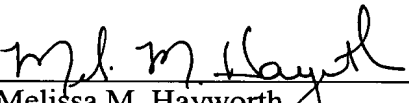
Conclusion

The art of record does not disclose or suggest the inventive concept of the presently claimed invention as defined by the claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the claims and allowance of the subject application is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number, if it is believed that prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.

Respectfully submitted,

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